



## R . k. Narayan Malgudi ki Kanhaiya : a study

Manisha

manishasheokand525@gmail.com

### Abstract

R. K. Narayan is one of the pioneer authors of Indian English Fiction in the twentieth century, and his brilliance cannot be separated from that of the other pioneer writers. Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, and Raja Rao were the three members of the trinity. Narayan is widely recognised as the consummate expert in the art of narrative telling. Malgudi, the fantastical setting, functions in much the same way as a protagonist might in his work. His various and wide works, which are the result of genuine and rich experiences, have practically endeavoured to cover all facets of life. His writings are the result of real and rich experiences. His literary work is enriched by the huge gallery of copious characters, each of which is vivid and accurate to real life. Even if he has described reality in actual rhythm, he has remained unaffected and detached himself, only holding the mirror up to nature. He never made an attempt to impose his own ideology or preach to others. The endeavour to evaluate Narayan's fiction in a concise manner while highlighting his eminent literary abilities. Refraction is a notion that was invented during the production of the 1986 television version of Malgudi Days (1943), which was written by a notable Indian English writer named R. K. Narayan. According to him, the term refraction refers to the adaptation of a work of literature to a new audience, with the purpose of changing the manner in which that audience reads that work. The purpose of this is to shed light on the phenomenon of television adaptation as refraction by investigating the various cultural, linguistic, and ideological constraints that have been discussed. These constraints had an impact on how the phenomenon was reproduced in the culture of the target language, which was Hindi, and ultimately played a significant part in the history and culture of the audience that was being targeted. The study intends to investigate the factors that led to and the manner in which the television version of Narayan's work distorted his literary renown in post-colonial India.

**Keywords:** R.K. Narayan, television adaptation, Indian writing in English, refraction, translation studies, literary fame, post-colonial India

### Introduction

R. K. Narayan, the author of the collection of short tales titled Malgudi Days, is one of the well-known Indian English authors who rose to prominence in the English-speaking world in the years after Rabindranath Tagore's passing. In the year 1960, the Indian government presented him with the Sahitya Akademi Award, making him the first Indian author to have their work published in English. In addition to that, he was considered for the Nobel Prize in the year 1996. His body of writing includes works like as novels, novellas, short tales, retold epics, travelogues, essays, chronicles, and memoirs. He published his own writings via his own publishing company, which he called Indian Thought Publication. "His most well-known works include Bachelor of Arts, The Guide, The Man-Eater of Malgudi, Swami and Friends, and Malgudi Days. This is largely due to the fact that The Guide was turned into a movie in



the year 1965, and *Malgudi Days* and *Swami and Friends* were turned into television series in the year 1986. *Malgudi Days* is a collection of thirty-two short stories that were first published in the year 1943 by Indian Thought Publication. These tales are set in the fictitious town of Malgudi, and each one offers a picture of Indian culture in its own manner. The original material is known as *Malgudi Days*. Narayan highlights common occurrences like as anguish, agony, love, surprise, despair, desire, sadness, fear, hatred, panic, dejection, anxiety, and other sociopsychological concerns that innocent people of his nation encounter. However, he also gently advises other methods to cope with these issues. His narratives are representative of mankind as a whole and have a broad appeal. Every narrative has its own distinctive qualities, but in the end, they all have the same universal impact on people. He unavoidably depicts the innately Indian ideals that are embedded in the individuals as well as the tenacity of the traditions. He depicts indigenous traditional culture and the values that underpin it, which are capable of competing with contemporary values. However, at the same time as Narayan demonstrates an openness to the contemporary world, he most likely views the rural areas as places where culture is preserved, much like Gandhi, who was of the opinion that authentic India can only be found in the countryside. As a result, he makes an effort to build a bridge between the forgotten past and the socio-cultural advancements that have been inspired by the west. On the other hand, there are others who are unwavering in their support of either the former or the latter. There is a good chance that the people behind the TV versions had some of the same thoughts as Narayan. It was reissued in 1984 by the Penguin Classics edition, and it's conceivable that this is one of the reasons why TV producers paid attention to this particular work in the first place. The adaptation of *Malgudi Days* that was shown on Doordarshan television in 1986 was given the same name as the source material and garnered a large number of devoted viewers. Each of the tales told in *Malgudi Days* was presented in the form of an episode. The television series had works adapted from not only *Malgudi Days* but also *Swami and Friends*, *A Horse and Two Goats*, *Dodo*, *Lawley Road*, and *The Vendor of Sweets*, making it a thirty-nine episode series directed by Shankar Nag, an eminent actor-director from Mysore, Karnataka. *Malgudi Days* was only one of the works adapted for the series. Both T.S. Narasimhan and Door darshan were responsible for its production. It had a lot of repeat telecasts, and the fact that it was so straightforward made it appealing to the average person. The whole of the country responded positively to it. Eleven of the short tales included in *Malgudi Days* were adapted for television by Doordarshan in 1986; the other twenty-eight episodes of *Malgudi Days* were taken from other works written by Narayan. The following are some of the short tales that were included: *The Missing Mail*, *The Gateman's Gift*, *Eswaran*, *Engine Trouble*, *Forty-five a Month*, *Trail of the Green Blazer*, *A Willing Slave*, *Leela's Friend*, *Naga*, *Cat Within*, and *The Edge*. If you read one tale each day for thirty-two weeks in a row, at the conclusion of the book you will have experienced *Malgudi Days* as a *Malgudi month*, more or less. This is one method that I recommend that you read this book. Here is one way that I propose that you read this book. The daily reading will, with very few exceptions, take around 10 minutes from start to finish. The great majority of these short tales are less than 10 pages, some of them are shorter than five pages, and just one of them is more than twenty pages. You could be thinking to yourself, What a great concept! and ten minutes a day, that's



something I can handle. And if you are the kind of morally upstanding person who is content after eating just one piece of chocolate from a box of chocolates and is never tempted, until the following day, by a second piece of chocolate, then perhaps you will be able to appreciate *Malgudi Days* in a similarly self-controlled manner for the entirety of the month. If, on the other hand, you are anything like me, you may find that, after the first ten minutes of reading, you keep going for twenty, then thirty, devouring one storey after the next, until you finally look up and realise that a significant portion of your day has already passed. If this is the case for you, then you should be warned. When I first came across this book, my days were, much like the ones in these tales, both very long and short. I had only just given birth to my daughter, and I already had a boy who was two years old. My mornings were so hectic that I hardly had time to comb my hair, much alone relax with a good book and a cup of tea. After opening the front cover of *Malgudi Days*, the first thing I did was look at the table of contents and tally the number of different tales as if they were a lengthy list of different amounts. I don't know why I did this, but it was the first thing I did. Once I had computed the overall number, I thought, Aha! That's ideal, in a month I'll have completed. The entire number was thirty-two. While I was reading the first tale, *An Astrologer's Day*, I had a toddler sitting on my knee and a newborn sitting on my lap". I flipped the page once, and then only one more; the blank area on the page was already indicating that we were almost done. How is that even possible? I wondered; we're just getting started. I was expecting at most a vignette and more likely a drawing. But in spite of the fact that Narayan's tales are notoriously brief, reading them does not leave one with the impression that they are lacking in any way, unlike the experience passengers get these days on airlines, when they are served little portions of food under the guise of supper. The short storey *An Astrologer's Day* builds, complicates, and transforms a life in the span of four and a half pages; this is the difference between just describing something and creating a dramatic situation. In the first phrase, we are introduced to a nameless, faceless stranger; by the time we get to the final sentence, the title character has transformed into a guy who is guilty of attempted murder but with whom we empathise. The tense event serves as the story's linchpin. We are holding our breath out of dread that we may find out something much worse. The impact that is produced is what writers all around the world strive to accomplish throughout the course of their whole lives and in the process of writing hundreds of pages of their work. It is something that R. K. Narayan mentions in passing thirty-two times throughout this novel. An picture that is found in the storey *An Astrologer's Day* serves as an excellent metaphor for the creativity of Narayan. The astrologer sets his shop right next to a number of other merchants who sell their commodities in conditions of rather low light. "The astrologer conducted his business by the light of a flare that crackled and smoked up over the groundnut mound that was close, according to what Narayan recounts. The absence of municipal lights contributed significantly to the charm of the location, which was already rather captivating on its own. The area was illuminated by the lights from the shops. Some were lighted up by naked flares hung on poles, some by ancient bike lights, and one or two, like the astrologer's, were able to function without any lights of their own. In the narrative, a man approaches the astrologer and demands his destiny after the neighbouring flare has been extinguished. As a result, the astrologer is forced to operate under even more compromised conditions, glimpsing his subject's face in the same



amount of time as it takes to light a cheroot. The astrologer receives sufficient information from the glimpse to enable him to continue his task. It is this sudden outburst of intense light upon a character's world that Narayan provides again and again, in narratives that die down almost as soon as they begin, but in the course of which entire lives are powerfully illuminated. Narayan is a master of illuminating his characters' worlds through the use of sudden, intense bursts of light. Putting aside his many and outstanding books, R. K. Narayan has a secure place in the pantheon of short storey geniuses who wrote during and somewhat before his lifetime. Narayan's tightly wound tales, like those of Maupassant, share with his work a mastery of compression; that is, the ability to convey the rapid progression of events and the profound transformation of lives in the span of a few paragraphs that can be counted on the fingers of two hands. There is the same honesty and restraint in Narayan's writing as can be found in Maupassant's, as well as the same purity of voice. Both investigate the annoyances of those belonging to the middle class, the uncertainty of destiny, and the unavoidable yearnings that so often result in failure. Both artists paint depictions of ordinary life and share a worldview that is unbending and without compassion for the subjects of their work. The tales in *Malgudi Days* go right out of the gate, immediately assuming and securing the reader's attention in what they have to offer. It is astounding how much information is packed into each sentence of Narayan's writing. While other authors depend on paragraphs and pages to get their points across, Narayan extracts the full capacity of each sentence. In fact, he does this to such an extreme degree that his stories seem to be bound by an invisible yet essential mechanism, which is analogous to the metrical and quantitative constraints of poetry. The *Hindu*, a daily in Madras for whom Narayan had a contract for a weekly contribution starting in 1939, required Narayan to meet strict word count and column length requirements for several of these articles, and Narayan did so under the pressure of a strict deadline. On the other hand, there is nothing mechanical or repetitive about them; if anything, they seem to have been created in an impromptu manner with ease. Each one stands on its own, and even while it is not common practise to connect things in modern terminology, they are essentially interwoven even if they continue to operate independently of one another. The town of Malgudi serves as their unifying force. We may infer with reasonable certainty that it is situated in the southern region of India, in close proximity to both Madras, the city in which Narayan was born, and Mysore, the city in which he spent the most of his adult life. Taking a step back from the individual stories, one is able to take in the fictional equivalent of something resembling a village-scape painted by Pieter Brueghel the Elder. The village is teeming with inhabitants who are located in close proximity to one another, and it is fiercely realistic while also being portrayed in a whimsical manner. While we are exposed to particular personalities and get an understanding of the challenges they face, we are also kept aware of the larger community to which the characters belong. Malgudi is located on that fantastic map of locations in the literary world, either actual or fictitious, that not only serve as a backdrop but also have a personality of their own. To provide only three instances, Yoknapatawpha County, written about by Faulkner, Macondo, created by Garca Márquez, and Dublin, written about by Joyce are examples of how some authors doggedly adhere to a single territory, entering its innumerable doors and describing the individuals who live there. This is accomplished by Narayan with the meticulousness of a



census taker but with the compassion and sensitivity of an artist. The town of Malgudi serves as the backdrop not just for the tales included in this collection, but also for almost everything else that Narayan has written. It is a lively little town that is neither completely cosmopolitan nor agricultural in its spirit, despite the fact that it is rather tiny. There is even a movie studio in addition to a college, a railroad station, a tourist bureau, and a bureau of tourism. It is the kind of town that carnivals and expos pass through. It is also the kind of vibrant and unique neighbourhood that is becoming more uncommon not just in the United States but also all over the globe as suburban development continues to consume more and more land. Because the fictitious core of Narayan's work is so vivid, a scholar of the author's work named Dr. James M. Fennelly drew the beautiful map that is now included in this edition. The map depicts the physical characteristics of the town and was originally produced by Dr. Fennelly. Narayan doesn't just give the town a made-up name; he also names its streets, buildings, temples, and eateries, infusing the place with local colour at every step. The marketplace in Magadi is perhaps the most famous and travelled area of the city. It is teeming with fruit vendors and cobblers as well as snake charmers and knife grinders, all of whom are masterfully and sometimes urgently trying to coax customers into purchasing their wares. Like the individual who travels into the heart of his or her town each day for daily supplies, he, and by extension his reader, always see something new. Narayan's descriptions of the marketplace are always fresh and always interesting. The impersonal and important setting serves as the stage for the majority of the book's adventures and mishaps, which are scattered across its pages. One example may be found in the book *Trail of the Green Blazer*, which is as follows: Over everything boomed the voice of a bible-preacher, and when he paused for breath, from another corner the loudspeaker of a health van amplified on malaria and tuberculosis, the author writes. The jabber and babble of the marketplace was there, as people harangued, disputed prices, haggled, or greeted each other. Narayan is describing the kind of commercial cacophony that millions of people experience every day of their lives. This is an ageless civic phenomena that connects locations as diverse as New York's Times Square, Calcutta's Howrah Station, and London's Piccadilly Circus. Pickpocketing is a common activity in the setting of *Trail of the Green Blazer*, and the story's protagonist is no exception. When he observed a throng, he did it with attention, says Narayan. It was his occupation as a working professional. It is possible that Narayan is discussing his own profession when he says that a writer must take from life for their work. Narayan is also reminding us of the proverb that says authors must observe their world with a sharp and ravenous eye.

### **Conclusion**

The historical and political context of the literary devices used provides evidence that the production of *Malgudi Days* for television involved the conception of nationalism sentiment and Indian culture in relation to modernization processes. This is supported by the findings of an in-depth analysis of the literary devices. It goes without saying that political happenings and historical eras necessitated an acceptance of the reasons that were founded on philosophy, poetics, and language. This is something that may be shown by the contextual evidences of the 1986 adaption of *Malgudi Days*. It is extremely obvious that the adaptation of *Malgudi Days* took into consideration all of the limitations that were imposed by the persons who were



engaged in its development, demonstrating that it was a reflection. *Malgudi Days* on television was a representation of the post-colonial decolonizing philosophy that tried to dismantle the colonial façade and brought Indian cultural heritage to the forefront. It was an excellent solution to the problem of decolonizing the Indian mentality and restoring the grandeur of Indian culture, language, values, myths, authors, and literature. Through such adaptation, the Doordarshan channel finally contributed to the establishment of a national platform for Indian literature and the textuality of that literature. And the literary adaptations came to dominate the creative arts of filmmaking for television, which defied the consequences of colonialism in India by being able to reach every part of the country.

Not only did it play a significant role in the dissemination of the government's goal of decolonizing, but it also respected the child-centered philosophy of the film's creator, T.S. Narasimhan. The adaptor, driven by ideological restrictions, twisted equivalency in such a way that R.K. Narayan is never thought of as a children's writer, yet *Malgudi Days* is often remembered because of its children's characters, particularly Swami and Leela. The television adaptation of *Malgudi Days* was developed with proper regard for the philosophy, poetics, and language of the audience that it was intended for. In addition, it was one of the television series that contributed to the development of a culture of television viewing with the dual goals of fostering modernity and achieving a sense of national identity. On the level of the fictional medium that is television, it successfully fulfilled these objectives by portraying shared identity as the path that leads to unified nationality. The adaptation of *Malgudi Days* was particularly vital in establishing R. K. Narayan's literary prominence since it reached a wide segment of the Indian people that was unable to read or comprehend English. This was an important step in the process. It was able to have an impact on the society it was aimed for as well as inspire the nation's literary production. It finally contributed to the preservation of the work *Malgudi Days*, and as a result, it is today considered to be one of the masterpieces of Indian literature. In addition to this, it was instrumental in putting the Indian audience in front of television sets, so contributing to a degree of social cohesion via the expression of feelings that are common to many subgroups of the population". The study of such constraints for refraction of a text for a different medium vis-à-vis socio-historical context can reflect a certain ideology and poetics in a given society during a particular period of history. Ultimately, this study provides insights into the relationships between adaptations and history.

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